

# Shakespeariana

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## SHAKESPEARE—THE MAN OR THE BOOK?\*



THE literary world has been deluged with comment on both man and book: both have gone through all kinds of criticism—rational, scientific, and æsthetic. Both have suffered, and we suffer. To the student of both (and especially of the book) the greatest preliminary difficulty is how to approach the study of Shakespeare and of Shakespearian literature; when and where to begin and what critical investigation to make, preparatory to a beginning. To suggest a solution of this difficulty is the purpose of this paper. I write as a layman, a lover of Shakespeare, and as one who delights in the reading and study of all that is Shakespearian—not as a critic. I believe it is best to determine, each for himself, the authentic biographical data of Shakespeare the man; the causes, as near as we may, for the absence of the ordinary personal facts of his life. I believe we should give careful consideration to the basal and contributing literature of the Elizabethan era; to the contemporaneous life and literature of the Shakespearian age; to the environment of the man and the book. I believe we should faithfully attempt to ascertain the errors of the text, and their occasion: the faults of the author in style, construction, and the borrowed use of literary material, and his apology; the object, design, and purpose of his writings. And then if we must give character and cast to the author of the Shakespearian writings, let us build the man Shakespeare upon the authentic facts; and, in the end, be content to study the book Shakespeare, free from inference and conjecture. Much

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of criticism, to my mind, has been and is detrimental to the better understanding of what is Shakespearian. When classified, this much of criticism is found to be wholly inferential. It has made the man Shakespeare an ungrateful son; an oppressor of the poor; a robber of woman's virtue and of man's character; of other authors' productions and other men's possessions; a thief and a refugee from justice—a Shylock and an Iago; a vain coxcomb and the worshipper of titled nobility; a patrician—a descendant of England's noblest families and an ideal of all that is good and grand; a plebeian—the son of a butcher, and a hitching-post at the theatres; a lawyer's clerk, a learned man, a grammarian, a logician, and a philosopher; a man without learning, without principle, and devoid of moral sense; "An upstart crow," "Omnipresent creativeness," "Sweet Will," "Gentle Shakespeare," "Fancy's Child," "Sweet Swan of Avon," the quintessence of wisdom and the perfection of saints!

Words! Words!! Words!!! De Quincey has devoted three closely printed pages to prove that Shakespeare was born on April 23, on the bare fact that he was baptized on April 25; and, at the end, gives us the comforting conclusion that "We cannot do wrong if we drink to his memory on both the 22d and 23d." All the known facts of Shakespeare's life, no doubt, could be recorded in fewer lines. Emerson contends that "Shakespeare is the only biographer of Shakespeare; and even he can tell nothing, except to the Shakespeare in us." Carlyle proceeds to create an ideal hero out of Shakespeare's omnipresent creativeness. When we have finished reading his biographers and critics, we are safe in agreeing with Appleton Morgan, that

"After all, is it not true that Shakespeare—the man—is an ideal to each one of us, and his biography pasture for poets and for dreamers always, with the personal equation always to the fore? We have no use for dates and documents, muniments and pedigrees. Hamlet and Desdemona, Othello and Macbeth—love, rage, jealousy—every human passion—take their places. Who knows, or who can say that William Shakespeare was born in the month of April? And what does it matter if he were or were not?"

And so with every other biographical fact. Why should we lose our interest in the wisdom of a writer, that we may satisfy our idle curiosity in personal detail? Why should we seek to know that Shakespeare was totally depraved? Have we not, as an eternal inheritance, the expression of his genius? In youth, he may have been a moral rake, and yet have been above the average Englishman of his day. And, if a fact, how can this knowledge aid us in the interpretation of his lines? Would it not be quite as interesting, with the aid of the Shakespearian text to decide just how much of the vulture is in us, as to settle just how much of Satan was in Shakespeare? I am satisfied with an ideal Shakespeare, and with the belief that the man Shakespeare, who wrote the book Shakespeare, was born at different times between the days of "the blind old man of Scio's rocky isle," and the date of the First Folio; and I am not sure but some part of him was born since that time.

We know the fact, that there is a meagre detail of his life and character—the almost total absence of personal and literary memorials. It is important to determine how we can account for this condition of affairs. Carlyle has said: "If I say, therefore, that Shakespeare is the greatest of intellects, I have said all concerning him. But there is more in Shakespeare's intellect than we have yet seen. It is what I call an unconscious intellect." And I believe he had no adequate idea of his own intellectual powers. As I shall hereafter attempt to show, I believe his purposes and aims in life were of a more sordid nature, and in a different direction—that he had no thirst for literary fame; and for these reasons, he was careless in the preservation of the usual evidences of his own life and life's work. His was an age of *unconscious intellectuality*; and he, the representative of that age. It was an *acting and living* age, furnishing data for history—biographical and national; but it produced no historian. Shakespeare, in this respect, has suffered no more than his contemporaries. In the light of the facts, how stands the case of Edmund Spenser or Christopher Marlowe? Unlike to Richard Hooker, the coming generation gave them no Isaac Walton. Again, the theatre

was the Shakespearian reading-room ; and, at the same time, so far as the general public was concerned, it was Shakespeare's printing-press, where was taken his first proof sheets—impressions made on the minds of his attending audience. The theatre was an active agent in producing a literature, but could do little in preserving what it produced. Here was an inestimable power, powerless to preserve its own memorials, or memorials of its playwrights and players. It left its traditions, but no evidence of a fact. It appealed to the social side of man's nature ; and man's memory was its only storehouse. Under such circumstances, man naturally would preserve only what would satiate his own selfish appetite, or his selfish mental nature ; and that too only so long as it served its purpose. No doubt, on the street and in the coffee-house, the story of the writer and the play was repeated again and again. But who thought of making notes, or of treasuring facts ?

Again, the question may be asked, why did not a new generation write the literary history of the past generation ? Many reasons may be given in answering this question. Shakespeare devoted most of his time to acting and writing plays, and to the management of theatrical companies and theatres. The publication of his and others' plays, authorized by him, no doubt, was made for a direct use in this line of employment ; and not for a general reading public. Again, the Puritan party was rapidly gaining power—a political power, which had no compromise for that which the party condemned. It had no love or admiration for the play, player, or play-writer. The Puritans assumed to believe that the theatre was presided over by his Satanic Majesty, and was the ante-chamber to his dominions. The Puritans, by a most narrow political and social policy, discouraged a broad culture and a refined literature—particularly, Shakespearian culture and literature ; and destroyed its evidences and its monuments. Again, at the time when we should expect the literature and literary history of the Elizabethan age to become of interest to a new generation of readers, there began the bitter Parliamentary war, with the Puritan party at its head. In it more attention was given to

their peculiar religion and to religious persecutions than to learning and culture, or to the preservation of literary material. Discord, dissension, and strife were rank and bitter. The contest was less national and more personal. This conflict found its way into the smallest hamlet. Court as well as common life experienced radical changes. There was an almost universal breaking away from the habits and customs of Elizabethan life and thought. Already, through the powerful influence of Prynne and his kind, by an act of Paliament, the theatres were closed, followed by an act prohibiting all performance of plays. To the Puritans, those austere praying men of God, who was Shakespeare but a contemptible play-actor, and what was the great Folio but the despicable play-book—the one to be hated and forgotten, and the other to be consigned to the flames as the works of Satan? If there should have been collected, in and about the theatres, any Shakespearian records, they were not likely to escape destruction. Again, all preserved material would probably be collected in Stratford and London—in and about Shakespeare's home and theatre. But, three years before he died, the Globe Theatre was destroyed by fire; soon after this, most of Stratford was in the same manner laid waste. During the Parliamentary war, Stratford, and, in fact, all Warwickshire, suffered most from the invasions of the contending armies. In 1665 the "Great Plague" broke out in London; and in the year following occurred the great fire. In war and in distress, literature is the first to lose interest and protection—the body and not the mind becomes of first importance. All these events happened at the time when we might expect the compilation of Elizabethan history—instead of which, fate had given England Puritan rage, war, pestilence, and fire. Fate seemed to baffle history, as if to aid destiny in its decree that Shakespeare should be the ideal child of the world and not the historical child of England.

Having ascertained the few authentic facts of Shakespeare's life, and having accounted for the absence of his biographical data, the student must determine whether a knowledge of the personal history of Shakespeare will aid him in the interpreta-

tion of the Shakespearian text. I do not think it will, and I believe a search of it will be prejudicial to the study of the book; and more especially so, if that history is to be gathered from his diversified writings. A faithfully detailed personal history of a writer often diminishes the interest in his writings; and it rarely assists in understanding them—as, for example, those of Lord Byron and Carlyle. I can see no reason why the man Shakespeare should be to us, in reality, just what we may ideally discover in the book Shakespeare. Such a process of popular criticism would, at the most, only lead to hero worship or, at the least, to contempt or indifference, and would only detract from the merit of the Book. To my mind, such criticism is responsible for the prevalent “vague popular knowledge of the mighty poet’s cardinal dramas.” We have heard his name from our fathers, and we teach it to our children. Early in life, we learn that, to appear wise, one must be able to converse about Shakespeare. For that purpose we have proceeded to pick up here and there, a scrap of criticism, and therewith have been able to air considerable wisdom, without fear of detection. To illustrate, I quote from a paper, several years since, read before a local Shakespeare Club:

“Shakespeare wrote by the light that was in him, and we should read him by the light that is in us. He is a poet, a philosopher, and a master of rhetoric. He possesses poetic inspiration, humor, and eloquence. All these facts must enter into our study of Shakespeare. The psychological, social, and political bearing of each play should be determined as a result of our study. We should seek the personality and individuality of each Shakespearian character: as, for instance, *Hamlet*, may be considered more of a thinker than a man of reflection, more of a poet than a philosopher; the play, *Hamlet*, may be studied as a parallel between thought and action; the play, *King Lear*, as representing the extreme limitation of human ingratitude; the play, *Othello*, as presenting the success of a malevolent heart and the failure of a noble mind; the play, *Richard III.*, as a study of perfidy and crime.”

This may not be true criticism, but to the young members of that club it had the ring of criticism, and the sound of wisdom.

When, in private, the writer's position was called in question, he confessed that he had not read one of the plays mentioned in his paper. Some eminent critics have made similar confessions. This illustrates the evil tendency of conjectural criticism.

How many of us have read a moiety of the Shakespeare plays, or studied a half score of them? When we reflect, it is not unreasonable that it should be the case that very few of us have; for there obtains the almost universal belief that in Shakespeare, the man, we have "an English king whom no time or chance, Parliament or combination of Parliaments can dethrone; and do not the most of us pay him the fealty due, without troubling ourselves to read the charter on which his Kingship rests? This King, Shakespeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying-signs; indestructible; really more valuable in that point of view than any other means or appliance whatsoever?" Under such high-pressure criticism as this, what student can exalt the study of the book? or, through the facts warranted, dethrone Shakespeare, the king? And, how easily is this æsthetic wisdom mistaken for the study and consideration of fact, truth, and principle. Such criticism will have it that Shakespeare is the god of the literary universe; and, worship being a matter of sentiment, study can be no part of the economy of his divine government. On the other hand, we have paid the highest tribute possible to the memory of Shakespeare, the Man, and to our own good sense, when we have read and studied his plays, poems, and sonnets. The "strongest of rallying-signs" is the more thorough understanding of the wisdom of this "greatest of intellects."

Of the same cloth is the advice of teachers and professors, that a library is complete with the *ownership* of a Bible and a Shakespeare. No one is a Christian unless he *owns* a Bible, and no one can hope to be wise unless he *owns* a Shakespeare. The pupil, on this advice, procures a library, and dare you say that this same advice too often leads him to be content with the *ownership*? for, should a hard plodding student dare criticise the style, or call in question the philosophy and history of



these books, he, too often, would be censured into silence by the same teachers and professors. What presumption it would be for a pupil to criticise the immortal Shakespeare! Take down your dust-covered Shakespeare, to learn what strange sounding titles appear in the table of contents! How many of us have, with pen in hand, read and analyzed a single play? Who of us has given careful study to a single Shakespearian character? What reader of Shakespeare has compared history with the Shakespearian record? or transcribed from or marked on the margin of a much read Shakespeare, "every intellectual jewel, every flower of sentiment?" or attempted any real study of Shakespearian morals and manners, philosophy and religion, style and method, social economy and politics? or studied the text in the light of contemporaneous literature and history, and in the light of all past literature and history? I feel sure that a little reflection here, will induce a more diligent study of the text, and will lead to a less reliance upon inferential criticism. And I cannot go amiss in giving Richard Grant White's estimate of this kind of criticism. He says:

"More inflated nonsense, more pompous platitude, more misleading speculation has been uttered upon Shakespeare and his plays than upon any other subject but music and religion. The occasion of which calamity is that of all subjects which are of general interest—these are the most remote from reason, the most incomprehensible."

We have two books that will live as long as language is guaranteed to man—our Bible and our Shakespeare. The Bible is the text *for* humanity, and the Shakespeare is the text *of* humanity. The value of these books is less in knowing their authorship, and more in knowing their contents, less in the personal, and more in the impersonal; less in the biographical, and more in the interpretation. It is of secondary importance to us to be certain that Moses wrote the *Pentateuch*, or that Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*. When we have ended a faithful investigation of the authorship, we have not reached the beginning of a faithful interpretation. I can discover no reason why we should try to build when and where we have no facts upon



which to build; or why we should give our attention to that which is and must always remain uncertain, and that too at the expense of that which possesses inestimable worth to every student. A conjectural inference is never equal to a reasonable conclusion. The life of Shakespeare cannot become biographical either in literature or history; and in the interest of truth, why not admit it? Why not make the distinction between the personal and the impersonal—the man and the book, and give our whole attention to the interpretation of the text?

All the facts and circumstances point to the conclusion that the plays of Shakespeare were written for an exclusive use at theatres, and therefore, for a listening public—a public seeking present entertainment and personal enjoyment—a public euphuistic in every sense. I can discover no indication that the author of the Shakespearian plays had in view a reading, thinking, reflecting public, or that he intended to submit his writings and compilations to the censorship of criticism. He certainly had no need to follow the rules of construction, or to be accurate in truth or principle, or to destroy all trace of his use of existing literary material. I believe he looked upon his labor as culminating in the acted play; there his hopes and his expectations ended, and he was content with the praise of an appreciative audience and the English pounds taken at the door. In preparing his plays to attain this success, he toiled under the natural condition of things, wholly unconscious of his own genius. His environment was, we know, a real active life and new vigorous literature; a captivating society and an aspiring nation. It needed but a master-mind to direct the thought energies of this regenerate life, this potent literature, this enraptured society, this ambitious nation, to some success in an immediate end and purpose. With this literature before us, what is it but “intensely human.”

“Human nature in its appetites, passions, imperfections, vices, virtues; in its thoughts, aspirations, imaginations, in all the concrete forms of character in which it finds expression, in all the depths of depravity to which it sinks—this is what the Elizabethan literature represents and idealizes; and the total

effect of this exhibition of human life and exposition of human capacities . . . is the wholesome and inspiring effect of beauty and cheer. This belief in human nature, and tacit assumption of its right to expression, could only have arisen in an age which stimulated human energies by affording fresh fields for their development, and an age whose activity was impelled by a romantic and heroic rather than a theological spirit."

What the Elizabethan literature is, Elizabethan life was. Shakespeare, the book, is of this literature, and Shakespeare, the man, was of that life. He did not dream that his printed volume would stand side by side with his Bishops' Bible.

Seeking the true interpretation of the text of Shakespeare, we should look at all this just as it is, and not follow that criticism which imports to its author conscious powers of greatness, a purpose, a method, and a system; which finds in the book a personal, social, intellectual, and psychological representation of the man Shakespeare; which attempts to build history and biography on the lines of the author; which seeks to discover and solve hidden mystery where and when the problem is simply to discover truth. While criticism may defy the man, it should not mystify the book. If we *must* build on the lines, let it be in the interest of truth; let our Idol stand on the recorded words of its human representative, and be not surprised if their study convince us

"that this accepted teacher of the world, this beloved master of its heart, was, of all writers of high distinction, the most lacking of purpose of any kind, the most indifferent to truth and right, the most heedless, both in plan and in the use of language, the most careless of consistency in his own designs, the most flagrant violator of the rules which he himself laid down, the most disregardful of decency—a writer, who, having the finest moral perceptions that have yet been manifest in words, and being capable of intellectual life in the highest moral atmosphere, could do his work as if he, like his own Iago, lacked the moral sense."

I think we are warranted by the facts in the conclusion that the Shakespearian plays were compiled, written, revised, and rewritten for an immediate and sole use as a play-book, and for

an ultimate purpose—to increase the wealth of a practical business man. This conclusion will account for many errors of style and construction, errors in the application of principles, errors even in the use of worn and discarded literary material; and will afford a defence against the charge of plagiarism and the want of accuracy in truth and morality, and in purpose. By this conclusion we are not disturbed in our reading by the unmaterialized ghost of an ideal poet and philosopher stalking between the lines, and we have but to devote our energies to the study of the genius of the author in the setting of character. To Shakespeare, the effect on the stage being more important than the nicety or accuracy of expression, the construction was lost sight of. It was the force and effect of the expression, and not its truth, which were demanded. The interest was centred in the player reading his lines—not in the author who wrote them, and not in the composition. And, as to plagiarism, what of it and what is it? No one can deny that Shakespeare utilized openly the labor of other writers, and made use of it without hiding it under seeming originality. Emerson, speaking of this, says:

“He steals by this apology, that what he takes has no worth where he finds it, and the greatest where he leaves it. It has become to be practically a sort of a rule in literature, that a man having shown himself capable of original writing, is entitled thenceforth to steal from the writings of others at discretion. Thought is the property of him who can entertain it; and of him who can adequately place it.”

It may be that Shakespeare has done most to establish this rule; but who believes he wrote in view of establishing rules of criticism, or believing that his writings would become classics to some future generation? Again, he was not responsible for the publication of his writings, as we now have them.

I believe that Shakespeare was the guiding genius of what are now known as the Shakespearian plays, poems, and sonnets. Considering England's social, religious, and political status, her increased literary and educational facilities, the improved condition of her common people, her increased wealth, the

rapid growth of her commercial enterprises, the rapid expansion of her political dominions, the cosmopolitan character of her metropolis, the productions of her printing-presses, her military power, her international relations, the tendency to religious tolerance, we may reasonably conclude: that it was possible for some conservative mind to produce the book Shakespeare at the time of its appearance, and at no other time; and that it is more than probable that it was written by Shakespeare—a man free from the bias and prejudice common to college-bred men, and even to men of broad and deep learning. To my mind, the Shakespearian works are the product of a conservative genius, more than the product of some college or university man, or men. Their author need not have been a traveller, nor a scholar able to read the world's literature in the original; for to an English writer London presented the new and the old world, and he had at hand, in English translation, the literature of all peoples. This was the environment of Shakespeare. And even more, he had the literary wealth, the personal influence and direct assistance of a grand company of literature-builders—fathers of modern English prose, such as Sir Thomas More, Roger Ascham, and Richard Hooker; poets, such as Edmund Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney; historians, such as Holinshed and Sir Walter Raleigh; chroniclers, such as Hakluyt; romancers, such as Lily; pamphleteers, such as Nash and Green; philosophers, such as Bacon; and above all, dramatists, such as Udal, Richards, Sackville, Still, Haywood, Norton, Edwards, Lodge, Munday, Kyd, Alexander, Green, Chapman, Dekker, Webster, Middleton, Peale, Ford, Massinger, Beaumont, Fletcher, Chettle, Marston, Daniel, Marlowe, and Johnson. Of all these writers, only one complaining voice is heard against Shakespeare. These writers, like himself, used what suited them best of literary material at hand, and were indifferent and careless in that use and in the preservation of what they produced. Their mind-productions, I have no doubt, were to them but tools in their literary workshops, and not household gods.

“How they grew and flourished! How they wrote and rioted! How they pictured human nature! How they held up its whims and its greatness! How they brought forth the man, the angel, and the devil, and loosed them on the stage! How from one extreme to the other of the great diapason they swept the cords until all mankind trembled—and are trembling—with agitation!”

There is nothing lost by conceding that much may have come to Shakespeare, an offering for a price; or may have been picked up by him on the road from London to Stratford; or may have been inserted to satisfy the coarse taste of the mob in the pit, or the fancy of the attending nobility; or may have been collected from the gossip at the coffee-houses; or may have been changed to avoid giving offence at the court of the Queen or the King, or to conform to the changed relation of England with other nations; or may have been born of the hour and inserted by the players. On the whole, we may grant that much was dictated by policy and inserted from design. As a manager, Shakespeare no doubt received the assistance of abler actors than himself. From them, he must have received wise suggestions, and with his consent, they may have changed, if not improved his lines. His ventures were successful. He was able to employ literary help, as well as to purchase the writings of others. He travelled from London to Stratford. His society ranged from the green-room, if not from the mob in the pit, to the home of the nobility. His associates were college-bred men, and men of learning. Able men around him were wrangling about theology and religion, and discussing philosophy and politics. England had new enterprises, a new diplomacy, and a new religion. He owned a Bishops' Bible, and while at worship his eyes may never have ranged above the English throne: he no doubt read it to a purpose. The stage had its censorship, its enacted laws and promulgated proclamation. London had her gossips, her broadsides, and her taverns—taverns “of every kind, prelatical, Popish, Puritanic, Scientific, Literary, Whig, Tory. Whatever a man's notions might be, he could find in London, in a double sense, a tavern to his taste.”

We have the book as it is, and should study it as we would study all other literature of the Elizabethan age, and approach that study as reasonable, thinking students, and not with any preconceived notions, as that it sprung full born from "one of those delicate souls, which, like perfect instruments of music, vibrate themselves at the slightest touch." It is a book remarkable for its natural literary growth. Its errors are the results of well-defined causes. It was not intended as a work on history, or on political economy, or on ethics, or on philosophy. It was written for public recitation and for public hearing, not for private reading and study. It is a text of something and not a treatise *on* something, and, above all, it is not autobiographical, any more than all the literature of that time is autobiographical. And, for all there may be a manifest want of honesty and integrity in its author; he may be historically incorrect and purposely wrong; he may have deliberately used falsehood that he might not offend; he may have been an enemy to the common people; he may have done all that were possible to retard the growth of those institutions which are now the pride and glory of the English people; his inspirations may have come, not from the Bible, but from the powers of earth; he may have had no desire to be a martyr to the cause of liberty, or risk the chances of incarceration in the tower, or enjoy the felicity of shuffling off this mortal coil on the block; he was no reformer and therefore no Puritan; it was no matter of doubt with him,

"Whether 'tis nobler in mind to suffer  
The stings and arrows of outraged fortune,  
Or take up arms against a sea of troubles  
And by opposing end them."

No doubt he could have set to character a Cromwell; but, while he knew well the laws of life, he knew something of the love of life. No doubt his political convictions were measured by the censorship of the crown, and his ideas of ethics limited by court religion. No doubt, Bassanio expresses his idea of Puritanism when he says:

" In religion  
What damned error out some sober brow  
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,  
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?"

All this and more may be true. The book may represent all this. The book may be all this. But had it been otherwise, England would not have produced a Shakespeare, or erected a theatre, and the world would have been without the book. As it is we have the book, and before us its delightful study, from which, if desirable, each may build his ideal man Shakespeare.

" But whatever the name, and whoever the author—plays, poems, sonnets, we have them all"—all bound in one mighty book, that age cannot wither nor custom stale; perennial in our hearts and households forever. If word is better than the truth; if the name William Shakespeare is of more value than historical identification of the magnificent literature which the world worships as Shakespearian; . . . then by all means let traditionists hug the name! but be the substance ours—the book!" \*

CHARLES W. THOMAS.

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"KING RICHARD THE THIRD." †



HEN Hobbes expounded in his *Leviathan* his celebrated theory of the social compact, and described the natural state of mankind as a *bellum omnium in omnes*, he need not have looked back much more than a hundred years in the history of his own country to find as perfect an example of such a moral and political interregnum as the annals of the dark ages contain. England, during the closing scenes of the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, presented the melancholy spectacle of a country under a reign of terror, whose darkness was unrelieved by the faintest flicker of generous motive or of patriotic devotion. Rival factions alternately raised their candidates to the

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\* *Shakespeare in Fact and in Criticism*, Morgan, p. 89.

† Read before the Montreal Shakespeare Club, February 7, 1887.



perilous and ephemeral enjoyment of a sovereignty won by bloodshed and destined to perish in blood. King-making had become the only occupation of a nobility which had formerly immortalized itself by its defence of English liberties at home, and by its glorious feats of arms abroad; and, while this murderous game was being played above them, the Commons, helpless and dismayed, neglected their hard-won rights, suspended their petitions and remonstrances, and awaited with fearful minds the issue of this carnival of crime.

In the street scene of the second act of this play, one of the citizens expresses this widespread feeling of terror:

"Truly, the souls of men are full of dread:  
You cannot reason almost with a man  
That looks not heavily and full of fear."  
(II., iii., 38.)

Such is the dark background of the play, in which the sinister figure of Richard keeps the leading part. In this reign of unbridled ferocity, when men destroy each other like wolves—*homo, homini, lupus*—the fiercest wolf of them all is the terrible Duke of Gloster.

In the following sketch I shall not attempt to inquire how closely the Richard of Shakespeare resembles the Richard of history, but shall confine myself to an examination of this powerful personality as the dramatist has chosen to present it to us.

In order to arrive at a thorough comprehension of the character of Richard, we must not confine our attention to the play which bears his name. In the opening soliloquy he gives us the key to his character and the decision which influences his whole subsequent career:

"Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,  
Have no delight to pass away the time,  
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun,  
And descant on mine own deformity:  
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,  
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,  
I am determined to prove a villain,  
And hate the idle pleasures of these days."  
(I., i., 24.)

If, however, we turn to the preceding play of *Henry VI.*, we find that Richard had mapped out his course of action at a much earlier date, and that he was already a tolerably well-developed villain, even for those days, when the "weak piping time of peace" which followed the accession of Edward threatened to throw him momentarily out of his favorite employment. In the third part of that play (3 *Henry VI.*, III., ii.), immediately after helping his brother Edward to overthrow King Henry, he begins to count the obstacles in the way of his securing for himself that consummation of all his wishes, the crown of England; and with cold premeditation he calculates the number of his kindred who will have to be removed in order to make room for himself. At an early age, before he had definitely formulated any schemes of personal ambition, the glitter of the crown exercised a strong fascination on his youthful imagination. When he urges his father York to break his oath to Henry, on the specious pretence that an oath taken before an usurper is void, he endeavors to inflame his father's imagination by the prospect which to himself appeared so radiant:

"And, father, do but think  
How sweet it is to wear a crown;  
Within whose circuit is Elysium,  
And all that poets feign of bliss and joy."  
(3 *Henry VI.*, I., ii., 28.)

In the midst of the battle which ensues, Richard, after performing prodigies of valor, and thrice making a lane through the serried ranks of the foe to his father's side, encourages him with a similar appeal:

"A crown, or else a glorious tomb!  
A sceptre, or an earthly sepulchre."  
(3 *Henry VI.*, I., iv., 15.)

And when the unfortunate York is taken prisoner, crowned in derision with a paper crown, and put to death as a rebel, Richard, undeterred by his fate, is next seen stimulating the ambition of his brother Edward, and assisting him in a second

attempt to wrest the crown from Henry. It is when success has crowned this effort that he begins to see, somewhat dimly as yet, the possibility of turning all this king-making to his own advantage, and to muse on the chances of his reaching that glorious goal of his ambition—"the golden time I look for," as he calls it. He soliloquizes in much the same strain as we have seen him doing in the opening scene of *Richard III.*, and after revolving his schemes of treachery, exclaims :

"Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard ;  
What other pleasure can the world afford ?"

(3 *Henry VI.*, III., ii., 146.)

He passes in review his numerous physical defects, concludes that the lover's part is ludicrously unfit for him, and decides that the only satisfaction to which he can aspire is "to command, to check, to o'erbear such as are of better person" than himself.

Richard's villainy is not, therefore, the result of any sudden determination to play the villain, but is really a case of congenital wickedness, developed by unfavorable surroundings. His own mother declared that his infancy had been "tetchy and wayward," and his school-days "frightful, desperate, wild, and furious." Richard himself tells us that he has neither pity, love, nor fear, and he believes in the truth of the stories which were told concerning his birth :

"I came into the world with my legs forward :  
The midwife wonder'd, and the women cried,  
'Oh, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth !'  
And so I was ; which plainly signified  
That I should snarl and bite, and play the dog,  
Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so,  
Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it."

(3 *Henry VI.*, V., vi., 71 and 74.)

No character in fiction or in history could afford a better illustration of Bacon's dictum that "deformed persons are commonly even with nature ; for as nature hath done ill by them, so do they by nature ; being for the most part (as the Scripture saith) *void of natural affection* ; and so they have

their revenge of nature." Bacon goes on to say that "whosoever hath anything fixed in his person, that doth induce contempt, hath also a perpetual spur in himself to rescue and deliver himself from scorn," and concludes that such persons will seek to free themselves from scorn either by virtue, like Agestilaus, Æsop, and Socrates, or by malice.

Richard seems to have enrolled himself in the latter category from the start, and his wonderful talents enabled him to reach the "bad eminence" which he coveted. Whatever influence a sense of his bodily defects may have had on the formation and development of Richard's character, his misfortune in this respect fails to excite in us any of that sympathy and forgiveness which we generally feel for the disinherited ones of the earth when they take their revenge on nature, as Bacon says: nor do I think that Shakespeare intended to produce that effect on his hearers. There are only two passages which seem to contain a touch of pathos. The first is in the third part of *Henry VI.*, where Richard expresses his feeling of utter isolation:

"I have no brother, I am like no brother;  
And this word 'love,' which greybeards call divine,  
Be resident in men like one another,  
And not in me; I am myself alone."

(3 *Henry VI.*, V., vi., 80.)

The second instance occurs in *Richard III.*, when the blood-stained king, awakening from his fearful dream on the eve of the battle, cries in a moment of anguish:

"I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;  
And if I die, no soul shall pity me." (V., iii., 200.)

But the passing effect of these lines is quite destroyed by the appalling cruelty and cynicism which everywhere else characterize his utterances.

Very different is the effect produced on us by the very similar expressions of poor Arnold in Byron's drama, when, after enduring the taunts of his unnatural mother, who makes his deformity the subject of unceasing mockery and reproach, and finally drives him from home, he exclaims:

"I have no home, no kin,  
No kind—not made like other creatures, or  
To share their sports and pleasures. Must I bleed too  
Like them? Oh, that each drop which falls to earth  
Would rise a snake to sting them, as they have stung me!  
Or that the devil, to whom they liken me,  
Would aid his likeness! If I must partake  
His form, why not his power?"

But no sooner has he uttered this wish than he relents, and shows his passionate yearning for that love which has been denied him, and which would make him bear all his misery:

"One kind word  
From her who bore me would still reconcile me  
Even to this hateful aspect."

In Richard's career we look in vain for any moment when affection or sympathy could have diverted him from his fell designs. Indeed, when he dwells on the pleasures which are denied him, we are constrained to think that in speaking of love he means lust, and that the only deprivation which he felt was his inability to "caper nimbly in a lady's chamber."

Again, Richard appears to be entirely free from that excessive and morbid sensitiveness which usually accompanies physical imperfection. Whether this indifference was natural or acquired, his misshapen body habitually excites in him nothing but that jesting and cynical contempt which he feels for the foibles and failings of others. When his "honeyed words" have triumphed over Anne's resistance to his advances, he is merry at the thought that his personal charms have produced an impression on her:

"Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,  
Myself to be a marvellous proper man.  
I'll be at charges for a looking-glass;  
And entertain a score or two of tailors.

Since I am crept in favour with myself.  
I will maintain it with some little cost."

(I., iii., 254.)

Nor does he display the slightest concern at the taunts and

gibes of his enemies, who exhaust the vocabulary of vituperative epithets and of loathsome comparisons in their chorus of execrations against him.

In a word, a strong and callous disposition like that of Richard may command our admiration, but can never excite our compassion. Of his admirable mental and moral (or, say, immoral) equipment for the attainment of his ends, we have abundant proof; gifted with an undaunted courage, a quick and penetrating wit, a command of language and a power of repartee which almost invariably turned the tables on his detractors; a Napoleonic promptness of design, and a Napoleonic indifference to the suffering incident to the realization of his designs; a fertility of invention which delighted in difficulties and was flattered with impossibilities; a wonderful tenacity of purpose; a power of dissimulation and a freedom from conscientious scruples scarcely surpassed—he had every qualification for playing the terrible rôle which he had so early chosen.

This enumeration of the salient points in Richard's character will at once distinguish him very sharply from Shakespeare's other great villains: Macbeth and Iago. They all have in common one quality which prevents them from being ranked among vulgar criminals: I refer to their intellectual superiority. In Richard it takes the form of a strong practical knowledge of men and things; in Macbeth it rises to lofty philosophic thought; while in the case of Iago we see it displayed as critical subtlety—the free play of the pure reason, the *intellectus sibi permissus*. But in most other respects their motives and methods are essentially diverse. There is, indeed, an external resemblance between the careers of Richard and Macbeth, who both ascend the throne by treachery and murder, succeed for a time in throwing upon others the suspicion of their crimes, are both irresistibly drawn from one sin to another, being compelled, after killing their rivals, to murder their accomplices—Buckingham being the analogue of Banquo—and finally, after being disturbed and momentarily paralyzed by the dreadful apparition of the ghosts of their victims, recover their native

courage at the sight of a human foe, and die more nobly than they have lived.

But this superficial analogy must not make us lose sight of the radical differences between the two characters. We have seen that Richard's coronation was the consummation of a life-long ambition. Macbeth, on the contrary, appears to have been a rising and prosperous man, fairly well satisfied with his advancement, until the striking fulfilment of the first part of the witches' prediction set his somewhat superstitious mind a-thinking how the remaining part of the prophecy could be fulfilled. How differently Richard regards such omens. Instead of being guided and impelled by them, he dexterously makes use of them to influence persons more credulous than himself, and contemptuously refers to these devices as "drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams." Again, while Richard scouts the idea of conscience—

"but a word that cowards use,  
Devised at first to keep the strong in awe" (V., iii., 309),

Macbeth, on the contrary, when he first dimly conceives the possibility of his crime, shudders at the very thought which

". . . doth unfix my hair,  
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,  
Against the use of nature."

(*Macbeth*, I., iv., 134.)

The terrible inward conflict between Macbeth's sense of honor and duty and his suddenly awakened criminal intent, the revolt of his better nature in the execution of the deed, and the horrors of his remorse after yielding to the temptation, offer the most striking contrast to the conduct of Richard, who feels not the faintest twinge of regret for sins committed or of anxiety about projected crimes. In one of his rare moments of hesitation, when he says, in words which forcibly recall an exclamation of Macbeth's,

"But I am in  
So far in blood, that sin will pluck on sin" (IV., ii., 64),



his perplexity is not due to any of the pangs of conscience which tormented the Thane of Cawdor, but simply to the reflection that his scheme—murdering Elizabeth's two brothers, and then marrying her—was an "uncertain way of gain." And lest we should ascribe this hesitation to any maudlin strain of sentimentalism, he hastens to inform us in the very next line that "Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye."

While the outward circumstances of the lives of Richard and Iago present no such analogies as those we have traced between the lives of Richard and Macbeth, their inner life suggests far more points of resemblance. Both are thorough-going cynics and sceptics, and both of them profess the most unbounded contempt for the weaklings and dupes who are restrained by such empty words as conscience, virtue, and reputation. Richard's cynicism is that of a strong, shrewd man of action, whose life has been spent amid scenes of treachery and violence, and whose acute observation has invariably detected the evil impulses which animate all the actors in the bloody drama, whether they mask their passions under the guise of hypocrisy and obsequiousness, or under that of impudence and effrontery. And so, strongly contrasting with Othello's cynicism, on the other hand, which is the result of a speculative turn of mind, cultivated and widened by travel, and fed with the sentiments of a bad and envious heart, Richard's scepticism reminds us of the brutal incredulity and coarse materialism of Frederick the man of war, the worshipper of success; while that of Iago is more akin to the biting raillery and polished sarcasm of Voltaire the philosopher, the apostle of reason.

Iago's constitutional freedom from superstition is even greater than Richard's: for, while the latter in his waking moments ridicules the "babbling dreams" which "affright our souls," still, when sleep releases the energy of that iron will, and brings the lawless and tumultuous play of wandering thoughts, the influence of his age, surroundings, and education reasserts itself, and his terrified wife is nightly kept awake by his "timorous dreams." The most terrible of these nocturnal visitations occurs on the eve of the battle which decides his fate, and for a

moment terror strikes the hardened heart, and he utters a cry for mercy. He quickly recovers, however, when he realizes that he has been dreaming and that it is but "coward conscience" which afflicts him. On the morning of the conflict he has "a thousand hearts within his bosom," and dispels with scorn the idle fears that are but dreams.

But Iago has no haunting dreams, knows no terrors of the mind, and has so long and so thoroughly reasoned out his philosophical scepticism, that there can be no chance of his ever relapsing into any form of superstition. His pessimistic doctrines are not, like those of Richard, the rough-and-ready generalizations of a soldier; they are the mature convictions of a thinker, who has made a dispassionate study of the human heart, and who has confirmed his conclusions by comparing the conduct of men under various circumstances and in different climes.

Between the methods adopted by Richard and Iago to compass their ends, there is likewise a difference depending on their temperament. Richard is impatient and rapid in action; he has learnt "that fearful commenting is leaden servitor to dull delay," and he hastens from one crime to another, usually by the shortest way, not stopping to hear the cries of his victims, but solely bent on attaining the end which he has in view. Iago, on the contrary, who has no very definite personal ambition to gratify, but who is intent only on wreaking his revenge, displays more than a cruel insensibility to the sufferings of those whom he has vowed to destroy. He takes a positive delight in watching the tortures of his victim, and, like an Italian poisoner, stands by while the venom is slowly taking its effect on the doomed wretch. There is no hurry for him, he has full confidence in the potency of the drug, and he chides the petulant impatience of Roderigo:

"How poor are they that have not patience!  
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?  
Thou know'st, we work by wit and not by witchcraft;  
And wit depends on dilatory time."

(*Othello*, II., iii., 76.)

The end of Shakespeare's three great criminals is in keeping with their characters, and sufficiently satisfies the requirements of poetic justice. Richard displays in death the indomitable spirit which distinguishes him throughout the whole of his turbulent life of crime, but his last moments are disturbed by the avenging spirits of his numerous victims, and his ears are ringing with the curses which fall on the last representative of a monstrous brood, doomed to self-extirpation, and destined to make way for a better order of things. To Macbeth, also, is vouchsafed the death of a soldier, but he is appalled by the paralyzing consciousness of his guilt, and by the conviction that he is fulfilling the very prophecy which lured him on to his sin. For Iago is reserved a more cruel death of bodily torment—the nearest equivalent for the unspeakable mental agonies which he has caused to others and which he is himself incapable of suffering; and however indisposed we may be to advocate the application of the *lex talionis* in real life, we are often grateful to the dramatist who metes out to fiends of such refined cruelty and unbounded malevolence as Iago the only punishment which seems to restore the disturbed moral equilibrium.

"From this time forth I never will speak word."

E. LA FLEUR.

#### A STUDY IN "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING."

(Concluded from May Number.)



IT is to be doubted if a warrior in the present pulpit-stage controversy could more accurately select the standpoint for, or better the logic in, summing up for the defendant than did Mr. Nathan Field.

An anonymous tract, published just before Christmas, 1642-3, deserves mention. It contains a mixture of reason and sarcasm, and voices, I think, the sentiment of the thoughtful men of that day who favored theatres. Its title ran: *Certain Propositions offered to the consideration of the Honourable*

*Houses of Parliament.* The following paragraph will give one an opportunity to judge of its tone and temper :

That being [seeing] your sage counsels have thought fit to vote down stage players, root and branch, but many even of the well-affected to that reformation, have found, and hope hereafter to find, playhouses most convenient and happy places of meeting ; and that now in this bag-pipe, minstrelsy week (I mean this red pack of leisure days that is coming), there must be some Enterludes, whether you will or no, you would be pleased to declare yourselves, that you never meant to take away the calling of stage-plays, but reform the abuse of it : that is, that they bring no profane plots, but take them out of the Scripture all, (as that of Joseph and his Brethren would make the ladies weep ; that of David and his troubles would do pretty well for the present ; and doubtless Susannah and the two Elders would be a scene that would take above any that was ever yet presented). It would not be amiss, too, if instead of the music that plays between acts, there were only a Psalm sung for distinction sake. This might be easily brought to pass, if either the court play-writers be commanded to read the Scripture, or the city Scripture readers be commanded to write plays.

Ben Jonson took an active and most effective part in this conflict. In the person of *Zeal-of-the-land-Busy*, a Banbury man, the sleek minister, he holds up Puritanism to ridicule and contempt. While the character may be a little overdrawn and represent an extreme type of a Puritan, it yet is near enough to life to be "the best portrait of a Puritan which remains for us upon the pages of our dramatists."

*Bartholomew Fair*, in which *Zeal-of-the-land-Busy* appears, was first acted at the Hope Theatre in Bankside, October 31, 1614. It is rather a remarkable play, in that it described, thirty years beforehand, exactly how the Puritans would act when they obtained supreme power. It was not only a drama, but a prophecy. We can readily picture to ourselves the *gusto* with which audiences must have received the nasal disquisitions on the sinfulness of eating pig and the enormity of fairs, and especially the whole of scene third of the fifth act (which certainly could not have been more effectively written for a modern

audience than as it stands in Ben Jonson's trenchant English), and the final discomfiture of Mr. *Zeal-of-the-land-Busy*. Indeed, it is alleged to have been the abounding success of this play which obtained for its author the sobriquet of "Rare Ben Jonson."

Of all the dramatists of that period, not one was so closely allied to his profession as Shakespeare. Not only was he a writer of plays, but also an actor and stage-manager. More, he was a large shareholder in the Globe Theatre Company. The links that bound him to the theatre were therefore many and strong. Under such conditions, we may be sure he felt not only in heart, but in pocket. We may take it for granted that he felt keenly all the attacks upon his profession. So, indeed, we may draw from his *Sonnets*, if we believe them to be autobiographic. It would be natural to suppose that, in common with the other dramatists, he would resist these assaults. The fact is, however, that his allusions to the Puritans are neither many nor bitter. Not in wrath does he write of them. He gives no expression to "quick intellectual scorn" or "eager malice of the brain." But while he indeed hints at the extravagances of Puritanism, he does so in a benevolent, good-humored way; in a temper in perfect contrast to the rancor and bitterness which characterized most of the writers who took part in this controversy. In *Henry VIII*. occurs this passage: "*Port.* These are the youths that thunder at a playhouse, and fight for bitten apples; that no audience, but the tribulation of Tower-hill, or the limbs of Limehouse, their dear brothers, are able to endure." Some have considered this a reference to Puritan churches at Towerhill or Limehouse, wherever those places may have been. "The Tribulation does not sound in my ears like the name of any place of entertainment, unless it were particularly designed for the use of Religion's prudes, the Puritans."\* "I suspect the Tribulation to have been a puritanical meeting-house. The 'Limbs of Limehouse' I do not understand." This seems to me to be singularly indefinite.

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\*Steevens, quoted by Malone, edition 1821, vol. xix., p. 490.

Where these places were, whether or not there were Puritan congregations there, we do not know. More than that, it is extremely doubtful if Shakespeare wrote this part of *Henry VIII*. I agree with many of the critics that only part of it was his production, and this scene was not. Hence we can dismiss this passage as not containing an allusion to the Puritans by Shakespeare. In *All's Well* there are two passages which beyond any doubt refer to them: "*Clo.* . . . for young Charbon the puritan and old Poysam the papist, howsome'er their hearts are severed in religion, their heads are both one" seq. Malone says: "I apprehend this should be read old Poisson the papist, alluding to the custom of eating fish on fast days. Charbon the puritan alludes to the fiery zeal of that sect."\* The squabbles of sectarians are almost always about superficial and non-essential matters. In beliefs which are essential, there is much more of unanimity amongst men of all sects than fanatics either perceive or believe. Shakespeare recognized this fact, and here states it: "*Clo.* . . . Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart." Here is a satire on "the obstinacy with which the Puritans refused the use of ecclesiastical habits, which was, at that time, one principal cause of the breach of the union, and perhaps an insinuation that the modest purity of the surplice was sometimes a cover for pride."† "The aversion of the Puritans to a surplice‡ is alluded to in many of the old comedies." This passage, like the previous one, does not manifest any petty or unkind feeling on the part of Shakespeare towards the Puritans. I think, like thoughtful men in all ages, he must have regarded a wrangle about ecclesiastical vestments as puerile, and he so, indirectly, characterizes it in these lines. In *The Winter's Tale* the great dramatist puts into the clown's mouth the words, "but one puritan amongst them, and he sings psalms

\* Edition 1821, vol. x., p. 338.

† Johnson, quoted by Malone, edition 1821, vol. x., pp. 341, 342.

‡ Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, book v., ch. xxix., pp. 347-352.

to hornpipes." The fore-part of this play is a tragedy; the after-part is a pastoral comedy. These words occur in the latter. The clown in the passage quoted is considering the guests for whom he is to provide at the sheep-shearing feast. Amongst them is "but one Puritan, and he sings psalms to hornpipes." The poet may, and probably did, intend a little gentle irony, referring to the drawling, unmusical singing of the Puritans. Or he may mean that this Puritan is not a rigid sectary, and would not mar the happiness and innocent gayety of the feast, for while "he sings psalms" he does it "to hornpipes." In either case there is nothing ill-natured or sarcastic. That would have been out of harmony with this delightful scene, the characteristics of which are sweetness, purity, innocence, and love. While the authorship of *Pericles* is supposed to be an undecided question, there can be no doubt that the allusion therein to the Puritans redounds to their honor. Speaking of Marina, a Bawd says: "Fie, fie upon her! . . . she has me her quirks, her reasons, her master reasons, her prayers, her knees; that she would make a puritan of the devil, if he should cheapen a kiss of her." This sweet, pure girl, by her influence, could entirely transform even the Devil into a Puritan. Here surely is not detraction or depreciation, but commendation. Many have supposed that Shakespeare ridiculed Puritanism in the person of Malvolio. Hunter so thought:"\*

" . . . Though in other plays of Shakespeare we have indirect and sarcastical remarks on the opinions or practices by which the Puritan party were distinguished, it is in this play (*Twelfth Night*) that we have his grand attack upon them; that here, in fact, there is a systematic design of holding them up to ridicule. . . . Not only does this appear in particular expressions and passages in the play, but to those who are acquainted with the representations which their enemies made of the Puritan character it will appear sufficiently evident that Shakespeare intended to make Malvolio an abstract of that character, to exhibit in him all the worst features, and to combine them with others which were merely ridiculous."

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\* *Illustrations of Shakespeare*, vol. i., p. 381 seq.



Charles Cowden Clarke holds the some opinion : \*

"The fact is, Malvolio was intended to represent a member of that class, the main features of whose character betrayed an ostentatious moral vanity. Not satisfied with having obtained the privilege to act according to the dictates of their own consciences, and of having confirmed, in their behalf, the right of private judgment, they proceeded to wrench that power to the restraining of all dissentients within their own pinfold. When we consider that these men had begun to influence the legislature to restrict the players in their performances, and that, if they could have instituted a Puritanical autocracy, every description of dramatic entertainment, every quality of music, psalms only excepted, and they unaccompanied, would have been swept from the earth : when these provocations to resentment are considered, it is with no slight pleasure that we turn to the forbearance of our Sheakespeare in drawing the character of the overweening Malvolio."

Ward indorses this view : †

"The anti-Puritanism of Shakespeare shows itself (unless an isolated passage in *Henry VIII.*, which may not be from his hand, be taken into account) most characteristically in such a sketch of character as that of Malvolio."

Gervinus, *facile princeps* among the commentators says : ‡

"He (Malvolio) is an austere Puritan, his crossed garters point him out as such." §

I reject these opinions as being erroneous. Sir Toby, to be sure, intimates that Malvolio is a Puritan : "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?" But he had just a moment before said, "Malvolio's a Peg-a-Ramsey." When Sir Toby uttered these words, he was hardly in a mental condition to form a correct opinion on any subject. Malvolio's character is described for us with unerring

\* *Shakespeare-Characters*, pp. 210, 211.

† *English Dramatic Literature*, vol. i., p. 488.

‡ Gervinus errs in drawing such a conclusion from such a premise. While "the ancient Puritans affected this fashion" (cf. Malone, edition 1821, vol. xi., pp. 425, 426) of crossed garters, neither it nor the yellow stockings were confined to them. They were worn by many.

§ *Commentaries*, Translation, F. E. Bunnett, 1877, p. 425 seq.

accuracy by the two women, his mistress and her arch and witty maid. Olivia holds up before him a glass, in which he can see himself reflected. "Oh, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite." When Malvolio finds, and reads, and comments upon, the letter which Maria threw in his path, he manifests himself exactly as above described. Maria's estimate of him is equally correct. True, she says, "Sometimes he is a kind of puritan." But this very indefinite description she revises a moment later: "The devil a puritan that he is, or anything constantly, but a time-pleaser, an affectioned ass," seq. He was a conceited, egotistical coxcomb. His foible was overweening vanity. Such are qualities of weak natures, and surely no one could charge the Puritans with weakness. Shakespeare's insight into character was too penetrating and too accurate ever to make such a mistake. Besides, he had felt the hard blows the sect had dealt against the players and the plays. Morose, narrow-minded, fanatical, they may have been and probably were, but vain, asinine, weak, never! For this reason I do not consider that in Malvolio Shakespeare has attempted to personify and delineate Puritanism.\*

It remains to mention the character of Falstaff. Did Shakespeare intend in him to personify Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, the Lollard martyr, and thereby hold up to ridicule Lollardism, which was simply an earlier form of Puritanism? This subject more properly belongs to the *I.* and *II. Henry IV.*, and will be discussed in the Introduction to those plays.

It has thus appeared that, in the return volleys which the play-writers and actors fired back at the Puritans, Shakespeare took no real part. And yet the temptation to him to do so was

\*I think the interview between the clown and Malvolio (iv. 2), in which there is allusion to "the opinion of Pythagoras," has no reference to religion. It, according to Bucknill (*Mad-folk of Shakespeare*, pp. 322-325), simply "represents a caricature of the idea that madness is occasioned by demoniacal possession, and is curable by priestly exorcism. The idea was not merely a vulgar one in Shakespeare's time, and was maintained even long afterward by the learned and the pious."

greater than to his fellows, Jonson and the rest, simple because his interests were greater. Does this mean that he saw a nearer way, and that, while in his plays he ridiculed with gentleness and good humor the foibles of the Puritan party, he took care that they did not shut up his playhouses; fighting them most effectually from the inside, through an "understanding" with his friends the Lord Chamberlains and the Stage-Censors?

WM. H. FLEMING.

### SHAKESPEARE'S AMERICAN EDITORS.

#### III.—WILLIAM J. ROLFE.

**D**R. WILLIAM JAMES ROLFE, whose portrait forms our frontispiece this month, was born in Newburyport, Mass., Dec. 10, 1827. His boyhood was mainly passed in Lowell, Mass., where he was fitted for college in the public high school. He entered Amherst College in 1845, but after remaining there some three years, in the course of which he was the "chum" of J. H. Seelye, now President of the college, and W. G. Hammond, now at the head of the Law School in Iowa State University, he gave up his studies in order to become a teacher. After doing some work in Kirkwood Academy, in Maryland, he became Principal of Day's Academy, Wrentham, Mass., where he remained until December, 1852. He then took the mastership of the high school just established in Dorchester, Mass., and remained there until the summer of 1857, when he was invited to Lawrence, Mass., to take charge of the high school there. After four years spent in Lawrence, he removed to Salem, Mass., but after being there a year he was offered the mastership of the high school at Cambridge, Mass., where he has continued to reside, though he resigned his position in the school in the summer of 1868. Since that time he has devoted himself to editorial and literary work.

Ever since 1869 he has been one of the editors of the *Popular Science News* (formerly the *Boston Journal of Chemistry*),

and for several years past he has had charge of the department of "Shakespeariana" in the *Literary World*, besides contributing at intervals to other literary and scientific periodicals.

In 1865, Mr. Rolfe published a *Handbook of Latin Poetry* (made up of selections from Ovid, Virgil, and Horace), in conjunction with J. H. Hanson, A.M., of Waterville, Me. The Ovid and Virgil were issued as a separate volume in the following year. In 1867 he published an edition of Craik's *English of Shakespeare*, which has run through many editions. Between 1867 and 1869, in connection with Mr. J. A. Gillet, Teacher of Physics in the Cambridge High School (now professor in the Normal College, New York City), he brought out the *Cambridge Course of Physics* in six volumes, comprising an elementary and a more advanced text-book in Natural Philosophy, in Chemistry, and in Astronomy. This series has since been completely rewritten by the authors.

In 1870 Mr. Rolfe prepared a school edition of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, which was received with so much favor that he followed it up with editions of the *Tempest*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Henry VIII*. At the time he had no idea of editing more than half a dozen of the plays generally read in schools; but others were called for, and soon it became evident that a complete edition of Shakespeare's works, prepared on the same plan, would find a ready market. This "Friendly Edition" of the great dramatist, as Mary Cowden Clarke proposed that it be called, was completed after the lapse of thirteen years. And it rapidly became popular and has an extremely large sale.

Dr. Rolfe has published a volume of selections from Gray's poems, and another from Goldsmith's, in style similar to that of the Shakespeares: and beautifully illustrated school editions of Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, *Marmion*, and *Lay of the Last Minstrel*; also a complete edition of Scott's Poems, and of Tennyson's *Princess*, *Enoch Arden*, and other selections (four volumes in all), Byron's *Childe Harold*, two volumes of selections from Browning, the *Minor Poems of Milton*, and Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*—this last in connection with

his son, John C. Rolfe, Ph.D. He has published also three volumes of a series of "English Classics" intended for younger students than those for whom the above-mentioned books were prepared.

Dr. Rolfe received the honorary degree of A.M., at Harvard, in 1859, and the same degree was subsequently given him at Amherst, where he was also enrolled as a regular graduate of the class of 1849 at the suggestion of President Seelye, his old friend and classmate. In 1886 he joined the New York Shakespeare Society, then completing its first year, and in 1887 received the degree of Doctor of Letters from Amherst College.

From 1882 to 1887 Dr. Rolfe was President of the Martha's Vineyard Summer Institute, at Cottage City, Mass.

Dr. Rolfe's name is a tower of strength in Shakespearian scholarship. Shakespearians everywhere have a final confidence in his approval, and are satisfied that what passes with him, may pass with them. He has a keen eye for error, and such a delightful way of calling one's attention to it, that his fellow-students almost relish a lapse for the pleasure of being corrected by him. All of which means that he is a profound scholar, a warm friend, and a courteous gentleman.

## Miscellany.

MRS. CAROLINE HEALEY DALL writes to *The Nation*: "If the late Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps had regained comparative health, he had promised me to devote more time to the question of the descent of Anne Hathaway. When I began to correspond with him, he was positive that she did not belong to Shottery, and I agreed with him. Since that time I have wholly changed my opinion, and he modified his before he published his seventh edition of the 'Outlines.' We have two clues to Anne's history, and, so far as I know, only two. The first is, the will of Richard Hawthaway of Shottery, dated 1581, which mentions no daughter *Anne*, only a daughter Agnes. Mr. Phillipps tells us that the names Agnes and Anne were interchangeable. Why? Because, under the Norman pronunciation, the *g* was a silent letter, and we find the same person mentioned as Agnes, Annes, or Annis, and often in one instrument. The change from Annes to Anne was very easy, and very likely to be made if there were two of the same name in contiguity. In Richard's will mention is made of a daughter Agnes and a son Thomas, and he then leaves to Agnes and Elizabeth Hathaway 'a sheepe apeace of theme.' 'Daughters of Thomas Hathaway' he calls these, and this could not have been his son Thomas, not yet twenty years of age. Of his own children, only two were grown, namely, Agnes and Bartholomew. This Anne and Elizabeth, daughters of Thomas, seem to have been older, since no condition is attached to his bequest of a 'sheepe apeace.' May they not have been wards or children of a brother for whom the son was named?

"Of this will Fulke Sandells was one of the executors and John Richardson one of the witnesses. The names of these two persons, resident at Shottery, soon appear as Shakespeare's bondsmen in the marriage-bond executed November 28, 1582.

What more natural, if Anne were really under the care of Richard Hathaway? Two seals were used upon this bond, but only one was lettered. Under the circumstances, may not the R. H. upon this seal be supposed to stand for the Richard Hathaway whose executor Fulke Sandells was at the moment? But why, when Fulke Sandells is named as Fulke Sandells of *Shottery*, is 'Anne' called Anne Hathaway of *Stratford*? Is it not possible that, although in some way under the care of Richard Hathaway, she was and had been for some time in the employ of John Shakspeare at Henly Street?

"There is still another clue to Anne Shakespeare in this will. Richard Hathaway desires that a debt of four pounds, six shillings and eight-pence be paid to his shepherd, Thomas Whittington. Ten years after, in April, 1601, this same shepherd of the Shottery farm died and left in his will to the poor people of Stratford forty shillings 'that were in the hande of Anne Shaxspere, wife to Mr. William Shaxspere.' So Anne at least had not then lost sight of Shottery.

"Now for Lady Barnard's will. In January, 1570, she leaves handsome legacies to the daughters of her 'kinsman Thomas Hathaway,' a joiner, then living at Stratford. Of the five Hathaways mentioned, two are named Elisabeth and Joan. Joan was the name of Richard's wife at Shottery, and he had a daughter Elisabeth. A third is named Rose, and the Register of Burials at Stratford enters 'Rose, daughter to Thomas Hathaway, buried November 1, 1582.' Not too creditable a person, this Rose, to judge by other entries. Lady Barnard applies the word 'kinsman' to the Hartts as well as to this 'Thomas Hathaway. The Hartts were the grandchildren of her grandfather's sister. Why may not Hathaway have been the grandson of her grandmother's brother, all of them being cousins to herself 'twice removed'?

"Mr. Phillipps thought there was no connection between the Thomas mentioned in Richard's will and Richard's own family. He gave no reason, and it seems to me an arbitrary decision. No one of the above suggestions would have any value of itself, but, taken together, they seem to me to have weight."



SOME of the prices obtained at the Halliwell-Phillipps library sale in London a fortnight ago were these: *The First Booke of the Famous Historye of Penardo and Laissa*, other ways callid the *Warres of Love and Ambition*, *Doone in Heroik Verses*," fine copy, very rare, no copy being in the British Museum, and only another copy known, £14; first edition of Molière's *Amphitryon Comedie*," Paris, 1668, £13 10s; Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*," newly revised 1632, a rare edition, of which only two copies are known, the British Museum being without one, £75; Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare, designed for the use of young persons*, plates by W. Blake, fine copy, 1816, £10 5s.; first edition of Milton's *Lycidas*, Cambridge, 1638, £64; Shakespeare's *King John*, 1611, £11; Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1619, £15 10s.; Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, first edition, 1600, £50; first edition of *Pericles*, 1609, £30; the lithographic fac-similes of the early quarto editions of the separate works of Shakespeare, forty-eight volumes, 1863-71, subscribers' copy, £55; Halliwell-Phillipps' *Outlines on the Life of Shakespeare*, two volumes, octavo, 1887, with the copyright, £50; Drayton's *Polyolbion*, first edition, John Milton's copy, £43; *Plutarch's Lives*, the scarce 1595 edition, £16 5s.; first folio Shakespeare (12½ inches by 8 inches), £95; fourth folio Shakespeare (14 inches by 9 inches), £30; a collection of deeds, drawings, cuttings, etc., relating to Shakespeare and Stratford-on-Avon, in one volume, £45; a very extensive and important collection of Shakespeareana in forty large scrap-books, £290. The sale realized £2298 10s 6d. to the executors.

EDITOR SHAKESPEARIANA: I am glad to be able to supply another quotation to strengthen Mr. Morgan's assertion that there was no "bottle ale" on Shakespeare's table. In a work entitled *A Discourse of Englishe Poetrie*, by William Webbe, printed at London in 1589, the author sneers at English rhyme and especially at the general idea that rhyme is poetry, arguing that rhyme can be employed to enlarge upon the meanest themes; thus:

"Every one that can frame a booke in rime, though it be but in commendation of copper noses or bottle ale, will catch at the garland due to Poets."

That is to complain, I suppose, that there are scarcely two more contemptible things than the red nose of a reeking sot and nasty bottle ale—but that even they, if celebrated in rhyme—were in those days accepted as making the celebrator a "poet." The conclusion that a gentleman farmer, one of the products of whose farm was jolly home-brewed ale, would be very careful not to have "swipes" upon his table to offend the nostrils of his city guests seems to me to follow.

Master William Webbe's complaint (which is, doubtless, another form of Horace's *Ludere qui nescit campestribus abstinet armis*) is therefore, I think, quite in point.

Yours respectfully,

HENRY FEARON COOKE.

ST. JOHN, N. B., Aug. 12, 1889.

THE "Shakespeare pure and simple" revival at Munich seems to have been a complete failure. It is thus described by a correspondent: "The whole thing was rather of a disappointment. One expected the very crudest stage setting, but was prepared to enjoy it, since it was a representation of Shakespeare's own stage—what he himself saw, and wrote plays to fit into. What one saw was a fanciful crudeness—an elaborate but an invented crudeness. The curtain, to begin with, was a tapestry worked with figures of knights in armor, dragons, etc., and was drawn apart in the centre, which was all right. But the stage, when disclosed, was arbitrary in its arrangement, so far as any authorities I know of are concerned. It had a columned façade for a background, in which were three entrances closed with portières, and there were exits at the wings also. I do not understand why there were paintings over these doors—landscapes apparently. The covered gallery over the central entrance corresponded to what the De Witt picture demands, no doubt, but it was as unlike it as possible—except in position, indeed, there was no resemblance at all. Behind this façade was a second stage, and this was shifted and

reset as required. I admit that there was no lavishness of detail, and that the furniture used was of the scantiest, but beyond that, and the use of trumpets, I entirely failed to discover (according to my authorities, that is to say) any 'Shakespeare pure and simple' about it. The acting was fairly good, but the spectators who knew what they came for seemed to be quite as much disappointed as those who did not, and for whom the barrenness of stage effect seemed unrelieved by the actors' efforts. It was all the more remarkable to me when I reflected that De Witt's drawing of an actual Shakespearian theatre was easily accessible, and could have been utilized to make the occasion all it was advertised to be."

A FRIEND calls attention to the fact that another prominent name in Shakespearian literature—that of Dr. Nicholas Delius—is to be added to the necrology of 1888. Dr. Delius was born in Bremen, September 17, 1813, and died in Bonn, November 18, 1888, within a few weeks of the deaths of Dr. Halliwell-Phillipps and Dr. Elzé, his *confrères*. His work was of the quieter, solider, and less heralded sort, and its capital was minute examination of the Shakespeare text, word for word, resulting in what is known as "The Delius Text." Such labor is less showy and brilliant than that of the commentator or the "conjectural reader," but it is ten thousand times more useful and enduring.

AN ENGLISH tourist was lately detected by the Veronese police in carrying off a six pound fragment of Juliet's tomb (that is, the so-called bath-tub-shaped affair in the garden of the Franciscan nuns at Verona—so well known of tourists), which he had broken off with his hammer. This enterprising person was compelled to restore it and it will be cemented back in its place. The Glasgow *Herald* in commenting on the occurrence says:

"It matters but little that no one who knows the history of the place regards the tomb as genuine, for the people of Verona

it is at least as effective in inducing strangers to visit their city as if it were the undisputable sepulchre of the unfortunate daughter of the Capulets. Murray notes that 'it certainly was shown in the last century, before Shakespeare became generally known to the Italians. . . . Maria Louise got a bit of it, which she caused to be divided into hearts and gems, elegant necklaces, bracelets, etc., and many other sentimental young and elderly ladies have followed her Majesty's example.' It is all very well for a royal personage, such as Marie Louise, to get a bit of this troughlike tomb, but an unknown English traveller who attempts to carry off six pounds of red marble in a surreptitious manner, even for the gratification of sentiment, is treated with scorn by the journalists of the whole country, and deservedly so."

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## Shakespeare Societies.

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THE PARIS SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY.—The subjects under consideration at the last meeting of the society were the characters of Prince Henry and Hotspur, as shown in history and in the plays—1st and 2d parts of *Henry IV*. The fuller discussion of Falstaff is reserved for the next meeting, when the *Merry Wives of Windsor* will come under discussion. We summarize the facts and opinions expressed about Prince Henry.

This character appears to have been a special favorite with Shakespeare, and some German critics have seen in the Prince's life the counterpart of Shakespeare's own. The usually received historical account of Henry's character is followed by Shakespeare. The Rev. A. J. Church's recent book on Henry V. combats to some extent the ordinary version, showing that Henry was not so dissipated as is generally supposed.

In the plays we see a prince, given over to dissipation in his youth, suddenly turning over a new leaf on the death of his father, and worthily filling his high position.

There is no doubt about the bravery of the Prince. His father alone had some uncertainty on this point, and his doubts

are dispelled by his son's heroism at Shrewsbury. He has a strong will; none but a strong-willed man could have thrown off the companionship of Falstaff. He is chivalrous in the highest degree. Witness his generous praise of his enemy Hotspur, his noble act in freeing Douglas, and his kindly pity for Falstaff, "counterfeiting" death on the battlefield. It is not so easy to decide what were the reasons for his early conduct, nor, consequently, the causes of the change. In 1 *Henry IV.*, I., 2, Henry gives a reason for it. He compares himself to the sun who covers his face with clouds that when he shows himself he may the more wondered at:

"So much shall I falsify men's hopes,  
Like bright metal on a sullen ground,  
My reformation glittering o'er my fault  
Shall I show more goodly."

This view of his early character makes the change a natural result: It shows him acting consistently throughout. But it demands some improbabilities. It requires us to admit that a lad of 15 (he was born in 1388) should plan and carry out from so early an age a long-continued dissimulation. It has been said that the Prince's companionship with Falstaff would gain him the favor of the lower classes, whose good-will it was necessary to obtain. But to search for popularity by consorting with Dame Quickly's clients would be likely to produce the contrary effect among those who were worth conciliating—the middle-classes, tradesmen, etc., who were the chief sufferers by the Prince's escapades. Altogether it seems more reasonable to suppose that his early conduct was simply the exuberance of youthful spirits in a lad who had lost a mother's care, had been brought up chiefly by his grandmother, and who was now left pretty much to himself by his father. He easily falls into temptation and persuades himself that he is not going to allow himself to be overcome by his surroundings; that he will sow his wild oats and take care not to reap the crop. Shakespeare shows us the influences which cause this resolve to become effective: his two interviews with his father, the necessity for

action against the rebellious Hotspur and Glendower, and chiefly the shock of responsibility on the death of his father.

He had sufficient strength of will to throw off his evil associates, but the consequences of his actions are not to be got rid of. His death at the summit of his power and in the prime of life, was probably the result of his early dissipation.

W. J. MAXTON, *Hon. Secretary.*

THE LITERARY Department of the North Carolina Teachers' Assembly, at their session in Moorhead City, North Carolina, June 21, as a portion of its exercise, discussed the play of *Julius Cæsar*. Professors C. Alphonso Smith, Chas. D. McIvor, and others, participated. Prof. Smith combated Mr. Craik's remark that the play "Might more fitly be called after Brutus than Cæsar," that "Cæsar is only a subordinate character." If an engine, moved by steam, be justly named a steam-engine, not for the comparative amount of space occupied by the steam, but because the steam is the great motor power, so is this play justly named *Julius Cæsar*, not for the comparative amount of space occupied by Cæsar (his words, deeds, or spirit), but because Cæsar is the great motor that moves every wheel of the dramatic action of the *Julius Cæsar*.

WILL THE LOWELL SHAKESPEARE CLUB kindly send SHAKESPEARIANA, for insertion at once, a duplicate of the report it forwarded us during the summer, which appears to have been lost in transmission to the printers?

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## Editorial.

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IN the late issue of the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, there is reported a sermon, delivered in Trinity Church, by the vicar Dr. Arbuthnot, in which the reverend gentleman said :

"I do not reply to any newspaper criticism, for one reason, because I have not read it and do not wish to read it ; and for another because I believe anonymous attacks are best borne in silence. But, lest any of those who worship here and have as much right as I have to express their opinion upon and to bear their part in the work doing here, are needlessly alarmed by unfounded reports of what is projected, I would remind them that the work is not only in the hands of those who are probably the most eminent architects in England, but also that a committee, composed of the more prominent inhabitants of the parish, are carefully watching its progress. The Mayor and churchwardens, besides others who are well known for their artistic taste, are serving on this committee, and I think they may safely be trusted to keep a check, if it is necessary, on the architects, and any one else who may cherish revolutionary ideas. I do not, then, think any of you require reassuring on this point."

This is well as far as it goes. But it is, on the whole, we think, to be regretted that the vicar does not read the newspapers. For if their criticism be unjust it can hurt nobody, while the end to be gained is worth keeping in view. All concerned with this "restoration" should understand that what the world wants is not the "views," nor yet the best efforts of "the most eminent architects in England," who doubtless could build a temple a thousand times statelier, and a thousand times more splendid than Trinity Church, Stratford. What the world wants is a reasonable assurance that things will be left as they were—as nearly as possible—in Shakespeare's day. If there is any foundation for the rumors that have, from time to time, reached us, there has been some reason to fear that "the most eminent architects in England," no less than the "committee of the most prominent inhabitants," have not only not looked at



the matter with this view, but have not been beyond even "newspaper criticism" on the matter.

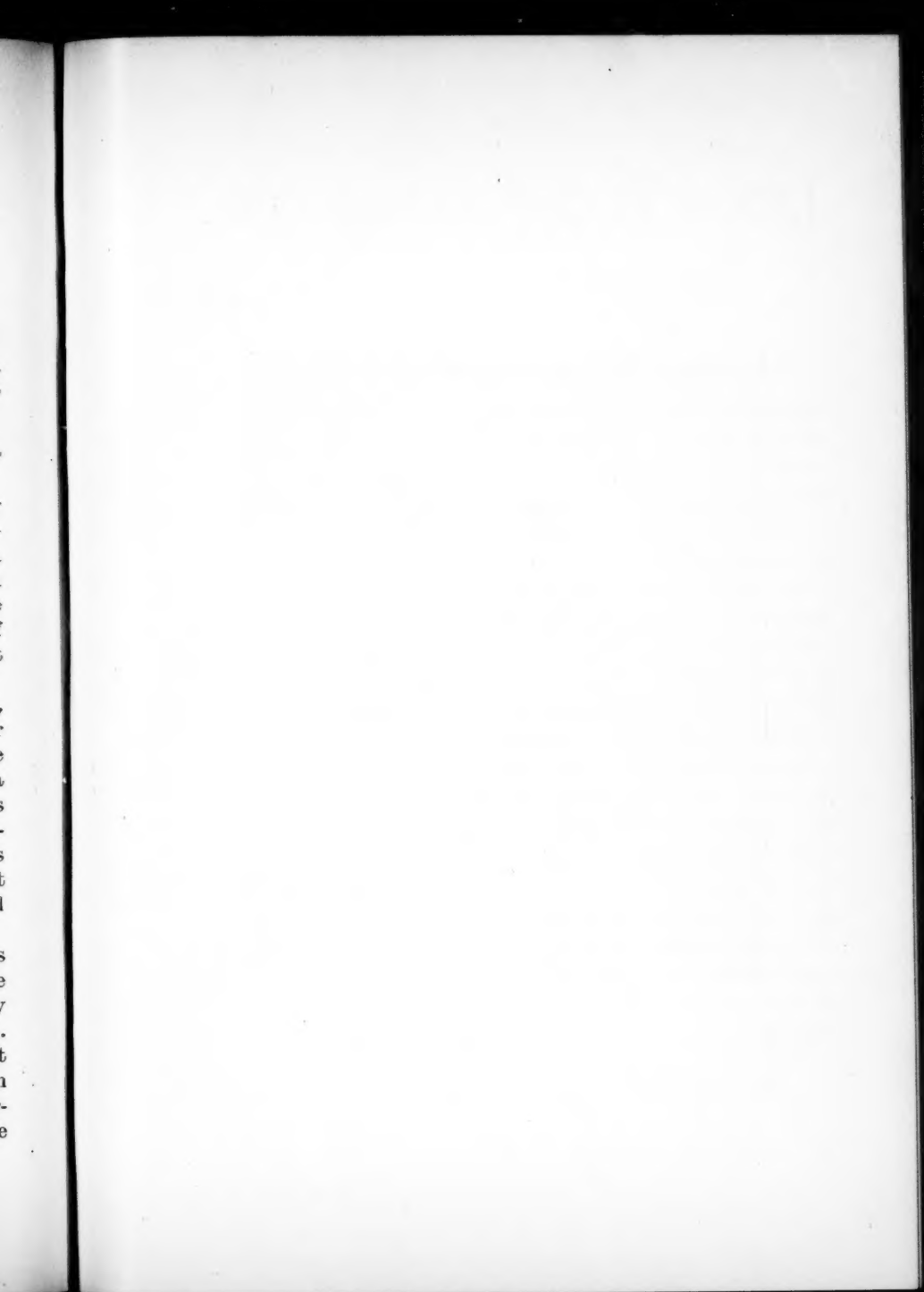
Elsewhere, in the same sermon, the vicar is reported as having said :

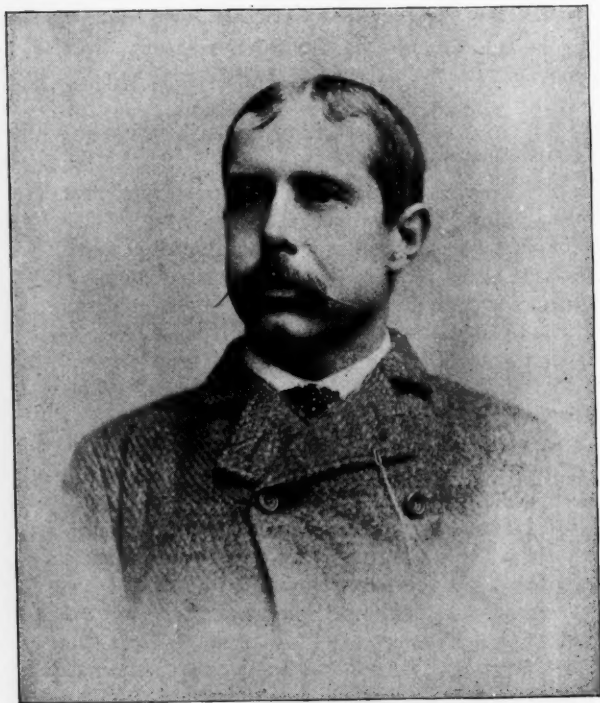
"First of all we have to remember for whom we decorate and beautify this church. It is not for Shakespeare. Nobody need accuse me of want of reverence for the poet's memory, or want of care for his last resting-place. But, though I do not object to this church being commonly called Shakespeare's church, nor to receive gifts for it in honor of his immortal memory, still, our primary object in promoting its beautification is that it is God's house."

Nobody doubts these propositions; but, however worthy or pious the motive, it is to be doubted if it could justify a reconstruction, however tending to "beautification," of the church which is Shakespeare's only monument built with hands, and whence his remains are not to be removed—under protest of the citizens—to Westminster Abbey, or to any other pile. If Shakespeare's mortal remains are to be left in this church, let us also leave the church there.

In one of the earliest issues of this magazine (Vol. I., p. 314), was printed an argument, urging that "it is not a privilege, or a license, but a peerless duty to open, repave and conserve the grave and sepulchre," that it was no less "a pious than a patriotic" obligation upon Englishmen to open Shakespeare's grave, "and do whatever modern science can to preserve whatever mortal is found therein, where every passing day leaves less visible to venerate." But if this is not to be done, let us at least leave the walls and the roof that shelter that grave and sepulchre alone!

In our August issue we mentioned a complaint, made by this same Vicar of Stratford, at a meeting of the Trustees of the Birthplace, that the residents of Stratford itself were singularly indifferent as to what is the town's greatest claim to attention. It is curious to find the reverend gentleman now crying out against criticism of the methods of "restoration," pursued on the church, because the "eminent architects" who are "restoring" that church are watched by a committee of those same "indifferent" residents.





APPLETON MORGAN.

*President of the New York Shakespeare Society.*